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## Opinions syndicales sur les structures syndicales Union Views on Union Structure

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### Article abstract

#### INTRODUCTION

People who still believe that the problem of Canadian unity is strictly a political issue must have had some serious second thoughts after reading reports from the Canadian Labour Congress Convention held in Toronto this year as well as those from the Confederation of National Trade Unions convention held in Montreal in 1966. The C.L.C. report showed that the problems of the Canadian Labour Congress or as it prefers to be called - Canada's House of Labour - bear an amazing resemblance to those of our own Federal Government. Many of Quebec's delegates attending the C.L.C. convention, although having no intention of breaking away from that organization did insist that they should enjoy a kind of special status within the C.L.C. which would enable them to enter into an agreement with the Confederation of National Trade Unions for the purpose of negotiating inter-union relations and whereby special status would be eliminated, but at the same time the fundamental principle of freedom of association would be respected in any changes in affiliation. The C.L.C. position was that - jurisdictional matters are the prerogative of the Canadian Labour Congress rather than Provincial Federations - Why were they making this request? That was an interesting question.

Over the past few years, the C.N.T.U. has made spectacular gains in Quebec mostly among non-unionized workers such as the Civil Servants of the Provincial Government, Hospital employees and several hundred Engineers who joined the ranks of the C.N.T.U. Its most prominent members, the C.N.T.U. also welcomed into its ranks thousands of workers who transferred their allegiance from Q.F.L. affiliates. The C.L.C. and C.F.P. cases are well known because they provoked the controversial Bill C-106, still before the House, affecting national to regional bargaining units in large public corporations. But there are many other instances that are just as important, even if they are less well known. These include the Montreal Metropolitan Area group of the Montreal Harbor employees, etc.

Certain Q.F.L. officers have indicated that such losses were due to the fact that the structures of the Canadian Congress were too rigid, that they did not allow the Quebec Federation of Labour enough freedom of movement to compete successfully with the C.N.T.U.

When the Writings committee in 1965 turned down their request for special status, which really meant more flexibility to adapt themselves to Quebec's differences, many expressed the opinion that the Q.F.L. Executive would one day, regret not having taken their demands more seriously.

They were probably right, as a matter of fact, both the Federal Government and the C.L.C. are at grips with the same desire for self-assertion on the part of Quebecers with the major difference being that Canada's Constitution is much more flexible than that of the Canadian Labour Congress and grants much more power and autonomy to the provinces than the C.L.C. does to its provincial federations. The latter, for instance, in the past were not even empowered to force C.L.C. affiliates on their territory to come into their own ranks. Many international union affiliates to the C.L.C. openly urge the Quebec Federation of Labour to refrain from joining. And there is nothing the Q.F.L. could do about it.

#### THE C.L.C., THE Q.F.L. AND THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC

Nevertheless, the difficulties of C.L.C. affiliates in Quebec are by no means due to that single cause and cannot be ascribed to Quebec nationalism or C.L.C. controlling views.

There are definitely larger issues involved. One must realize that the C.L.C.'s position appears rather precarious as this huge Canadian body sits astride two horses. There are the so called - international unions - on the one hand, or the Canadian subsidiaries of American unions, and Canadian national unions on the other. The plain fact is that the C.L.C. improves as it may appear with the great number of affiliates, has very little authority over the vast majority of them. The real control and power still remains with head offices in Pembroke, Toronto or Washington, D.C. and the C.L.C. officers in Ottawa are constantly harassed by orders which the unions receive from their American headquarters.

Such a fact accounts for certain "Big Labour" practices which severely curtail labour democracy at the local level. What attracts workers to national unions is primarily the advantages they have of making their own decisions and controlling their own affairs, at the local level with the very remoteness of headquarters in American unions leaves them with the feeling that they are being manoeuvred by people who know nothing about them or their economic, social and political problems. In that perspective, one might predict that Quebecers will not always be alone in their restlessness. It is a not too distant future, they might very well show that feeling with thousands of other Canadian workers in other provinces.

It is in secret either that the Q.F.L. wants international unions to establish Canadian districts, directed by Canadians and appointed by the Canadian membership and that union trusteeship when and where necessary should be administered by Canadian leaders.

As we all know, Canada is presently engaged in a rather painful debate about its future and at the center of this debate is the Province of Quebec, the largest of the provinces. In recent years all political parties have come out, first up in varying degrees, to lead two revolutions. The first, strikes at the whole concept of Canadian government structure.

The second revolution inside Quebec itself, and involving more intimately organized labour is directed at lifting Quebec's lagging economy and turning the control of it in the hands of Canadians. Inspired by the successful achievement of Europe's economic planning apparatus, the means of organizing provincial economy involves in the minds of our political planners a greater degree of control and intervention in our economy and a plan for the economic organization of the province with a view to the most complete utilization of its natural and human resources. It is not my intention to attribute labour militancy to the economic philosophy of statements of politicians but perhaps for the first time in our country's history, not only organized labour, but all levels of our social strata in Quebec are manifesting expectations that this country owes them a good living and respect for human dignity and not only just a living. Therefore, a good living can mean not only job security but higher income and respect for human values, and when this appears slow to coming even in the midst of a buoyant economy, the result is that we have considerable labour unrest.

Finally the political and economic philosophies of our politicians may seem and although supported by very impressive evidence to their justification, public opinion in other provinces has not yet caught up with all the implications of this economic, social and political revolution. In question is, how long will the present situation last and who is going to do something about it? In addition there is that repeated question coming from some English speaking Canadians which irritates French Canadians - "What does organized labour in Quebec really want?" Even if one's country involves knowing what the country wants, what it is, and what it may become and then working towards the resulting ideal, then lack of understanding, little knowledge of labour history in Quebec, satisfaction with the status quo, sheer distance, all combined must be the reason that makes certain English speaking Canadians ask this one question which so annoys the French Canadian.

While Quebec may want certain things from English Canada, it wants also a great deal more that is getting from its own government. Many spokesmen from Quebec will probably answer that they want equality and will speak of constitutional reform, special status and so on. But organized labour in Quebec maintains that what is needed are changes in Quebec's own internal structure and apparatus and lay the blame for Quebec's problems where it rightly belongs, directly upon Quebec's past governments which until 1960 were reactionary and kept Quebecers out of the mainstream of modern development. Organized labour in Quebec recognizes too well that constitutional reform, special status, etc., will not change a single child in face the modern industrial world. It will not relieve the working family of the burdens imposed by the money lenders, it will not improve housing, increase social security or lessen the burden of unemployment. It remembers how past governments utilized nationalistic and autocratic propensities to divert emphasis from the need for profound and costly internal domestic reform which was within the power of any Quebec government to achieve without need to blame others for their own failure. The power was there, but it was not used.

This does not however abolish the C.L.C. from blame, and changes in attitudes are as important as the emergence of the spirit and quest of dynamic reform itself. These changes in the C.L.C. like the reforming spirit of the C.N.T.U. must continue. The democratic union structure we seek is a spirit within individuals, giving all its members a sense of being vital elements in the Canadian society, and not economic vassals of American dominated labour unions, because as far as organized labour in Quebec is concerned, the economic, social, cultural and political welfare of Quebec workers has only been an abstraction except when it happened to coincide with the interests of American membership and leadership.

In order to analyse in part why the politics of American Unions operating in Quebec have not responded to the social, economic and political reforms so urgently in demand, it is necessary to observe the way in which American Unions have responded to and reflected the pressures resulting from the basic values of their own American Society.

The concept of American - business unionism - devoted to the self-interest of individual unions and their leaders rather than for national social reconstruction has important consequences in encouraging their leaders to view themselves as bound by the same standards as profit oriented businessmen rather than as leaders of a reformist social movement. Normally, the leaders of social movements are expected to have a - calling - to feel moved by a moral ethic toward serving certain major social values.

As the attitude and the behaviour of American Unions operating in Canada can be explained by the American cultural emphasis on the norms of personal - achievement - or getting ahead financially. Although it may seem paradoxical, the strength of this - achievement - norm is closely related to another value - equality of status - regardless of the background qualities of the individual. American culture applies the norms of a completely competitive society to everyone, which places a high premium on economic affluence and social ascent. These tangible qualities of certain American controlled Unions operating in Quebec in fact collaboration with American controlled companies reflect a mode of union ethics which are unacceptable and contrary to the aspirations of Quebecers. Much of the unique character of American controlled Unions as contrasted to that of party controlled and administered Canadian Unions may well stem as a result of or as a consequence of, American culture, - achievement -, - equality - at any price.

**SOCIAL VALUES AND AMERICAN UNIONISM**

Any effort to account for the ways in which American controlled unions sometimes conduct themselves in Canada and how American unionism differs in its outlook as regards to Canada's economic, social and political aspirations must deal with this concept of - business unionism - which seems to be the dominant ideology of the American labour movement, and which may be closely related also to pressures created by social discrimination, violence, and other basic values which are an outgrowth of the American political system.

Congressional investigations and journalistic reports in recent years dealing with the behavior of certain American labour leaders have made manifest that these leaders received higher salaries, were more wont to engage in practices which violate conventional morality and showed a lesser regard for the mechanics of democratic procedure than the leaders of the truly Canadian of European Trade Union movement. These leaders did not regard their office as a sacred trust or way of life. Their high incomes represented their adoption to the norms of getting ahead.

No doubt in the early days of American unionism, union leaders did adhere to an ideology which did prescribe certain standards of ethical behavior, or income and style of life, but they shifted from social or socialist unionism - business unionism -, they also changed their values and standards of comparison.

In the extent that union ethics has changed from a - calling - to a - career -, their social ideology has declined to that same extent. Their leaders have also lost all restrictions about competing themselves with businessmen or widening the gap between their salaries and those of their members.

The requirements attached to high union office in the United States, of - achievement - and - equality - with big businessmen, may also account for the fact that certain American union leaders have formally institutionalized disciplinary mechanisms which prevent the possibility of their being defeated for reelection, although many Canadian union leaders have achieved a great deal by moving up from the shop to union office. This shift has nowhere meant as much in terms of money and consequent style of life as in the United States. This may mean that they are under considerable pressure to find means to protect their source of status. Thus the greater the gap between that of union leadership and that from which the leader came and to which he might return on defeat, the greater the pressure to eliminate democratic rights within their union.

The greater authority and power centered in the hands of American International presidents as compared with Canadian leaders as well as the American union emphasis on the - cult of personality - are undoubtedly related to some of the same value patterns which foster explicit dictatorial practices in American unionism.

#### POLITICAL REFORM AND AMERICAN UNIONISM

It may be noted that this aspect of American Unionism may be viewed also as an outgrowth of the American political system. The United States system adopted two distinct institutions, the presidential and the federal systems. The principle election in the United States at the national, state and local levels is for one major, the president, or the governor, or the mayor, or the man who holds the key executive office. His cabinet is responsible to him, not his party, nor to parliamentary colleagues. Hence, there is an emphasis on - personality - and a relative de-emphasis of party or principles. These factors, which have become norms in the political sphere, undoubtedly affect the way in which many other institutions operate, including the American Labour Movement.

#### CONCLUSIONS

We have great economic, social and political problems in Canada. The contribution of a united labour movement respecting unity with diversity, to their solution would be considerable if the conditions of this collaboration could be achieved. But the C.L.C. must first reorganize itself. It must obtain not only jurisdictional independence from the American Labour Movement, but also financial, administrative and structural independence. It could then reorganize itself according to the requirements of the Canadian reality.

Canada's economic position in relation to its growth and development is a competitive position in foreign trade, the extent of foreign control, unemployment, and nuclear control have been the subject of constant concern and attention of all truly Canadian Trade Unions, in its struggle to shape our economic, social and cultural policy compatible with its national needs, aspirations, and sovereignty as a nation.

The fact is, that the booming economies of the world are those which by drastic measures have adapted themselves to new conditions and new needs. This gives them a solid base for growth. What is most distressing about the Canadian Labour scene is that no new approach is being made. In this direction, Canada's - House of Labor - still works to old patterns.

Should the labour movement in Canada must reexamine its structures and its general orientation. It is only at this condition that it will retain the confidence of its membership and the respect of the Canadian population. The time has gone for the American-type - business - trade-unionism. The labour movement must not only defend the worker as a wage earner, but also as a Canadian citizen and a human being. The old trend and better unionism must be completed by policies of cooperation in order to create for Canada a true economic democracy which will be distinguished by efficiency, freedom and public responsibility.

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# Opinions syndicales sur les structures syndicales

S.T. Payne

*Les structures du Congrès du travail du Canada, le cas du Québec et les valeurs du syndicalisme américain sont autant de sujets que l'auteur traite dans cet article.*

## Introduction

Ceux qui croyaient que la crise de l'unité canadienne est un problème exclusivement politique doivent avoir fait de sérieuses remises en question à la lecture des reportages sur le congrès CTC à Toronto cette année ainsi que ceux provenant du congrès de la CSN à Montréal en 1966.

Le mémoire du CTC met en évidence le fait que les problèmes du Congrès du travail du Canada ou, comme il préfère s'appeler, « La Chambre canadienne du Travail » ressemblent étrangement à ceux de notre gouvernement fédéral.

Nombre de délégués québécois au congrès du CTC, même s'ils n'avaient pas l'intention de rompre avec l'organisation insistaient sur un statut particulier au sein du CTC. Ce statut leur permettrait de conclure des ententes avec la CSN afin d'éliminer le maraudage entre centrales, tout en respectant le principe de liberté d'association dans les cas de changement d'allégeance. Le CTC maintenait que « les questions de juridiction relèvent du Congrès du travail du Canada et non des fédérations provinciales ». Qu'y avait-il derrière cette demande des délégués ? Les réponses sont nombreuses et dignes d'intérêt.

La CSN a enregistré des gains spectaculaires au Québec ces dernières années, surtout parmi les travailleurs non syndiqués, fonctionnaires provinciaux, employés d'hôpitaux et plusieurs centaines d'ingénieurs, venus grossir ses rangs. En plus desdits nouveaux syndiqués, la CSN accueillit des milliers de travailleurs des syndicats précédemment affiliés à la FTQ, et qui avaient changé d'allégeance. Les cas de Radio-Canada et du CP sont bien connus parce qu'ils ont provoqué le Bill C-186, très controversé, et d'ailleurs encore devant le parlement, touchant la question unités de négociation provinciales vs unités nationales, dans les grandes entreprises de service public. Mais il y a eu

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nombre d'autres cas moins bien connus qui n'en sont pas moins importants: celui des employés du transport en commun de Montréal, des groupes d'employés du port de Montréal, etc.

Certains permanents de la FTQ ont fait remarquer que la cause de ces pertes était la trop grande rigidité des structures du Congrès Canadien, qui ne donnait pas à la FTQ assez de liberté d'action pour mener une lutte efficace contre la CSN. Le congrès de 1965 à Winnipeg a refusé sa demande de statut particulier, qui lui aurait donné une plus grande flexibilité pour s'adapter aux conditions inhérentes au Québec. Nombreux sont ceux qui exprimaient alors l'opinion que l'exécutif du CTC aurait un jour à regretter de ne pas avoir pris leurs exigences au sérieux.

Sans doute avaient-ils raison. En effet, le gouvernement fédéral et le CTC sont tous les deux aux prises avec le même désir d'autodétermination des québécois, avec cette nuance toutefois que la constitution canadienne est beaucoup plus souple que celle du CTC et accorde beaucoup plus de pouvoirs et d'autonomie aux provinces que le CTC à ses fédérations provinciales. Ces dernières, par exemple, n'avaient même pas l'autorité nécessaire pour obtenir l'affiliation obligatoire des syndicats CTC opérant dans leur territoire. Plusieurs unions internationales affiliées au CTC sabotent ouvertement la FTQ en refusant leur adhésion. Et la FTQ n'y peut rien.

### **Le CTC, la FTQ et le Québec**

Néanmoins, les problèmes des syndicats québécois affiliés au CTC ne proviennent pas de cette seule cause. On ne peut non plus les attribuer au nationalisme québécois ou à la thèse centraliste du CTC.

Le problème dépasse largement ces facteurs. Il faut se rendre compte que le CTC est en assez mauvaise posture. En effet, le grand organisme canadien est à cheval sur deux destriers: d'un côté les unions soi-disant « internationales », filiales canadiennes de syndicats américains, et de l'autre les syndicats nationaux du Canada. La vérité toute nue, c'est que le CTC, d'apparence impressionnante par ses nombreuses filiales, n'a que très peu d'emprise sur elles dans la très grande majorité des cas. Le vrai pouvoir est à Pittsburg, à Détroit ou à Washington, D.C., centres de décision et de contrôle, et les permanents du CTC à Ottawa sont constamment débordés par les ordres reçus par ces syndicats de leurs centrales américaines.

Ces faits expliquent certaines tactiques « Big Labour » qui faussent le jeu de la démocratie ouvrière au niveau local. Ce qui attire les travailleurs vers les syndicats nationaux, c'est la possibilité qui leur est donnée de prendre leurs propres décisions et de contrôler leurs propres affaires au niveau local. L'éloignement des quartiers généraux des syndicats américains leur laisse l'impression d'être manoeuvrés par des

gens qu'ils ne connaissent pas et qui ne savent rien de leurs problèmes économiques, sociaux ou politiques. On peut donc prévoir que les québécois ne seront pas toujours les seuls mécontents. Dans un avenir qui n'est pas trop éloigné, ils pourraient bien partager ces sentiments avec des milliers de travailleurs canadiens des autres provinces.

La FTQ désire, comme chacun sait, que tous les syndicats internationaux établissent des régions canadiennes, dirigées par des canadiens élus par les membres canadiens, et lorsqu'on doit placer un syndicat sous tutelle, qu'on en confie l'administration à des canadiens.

Faut-il le rappeler — le Canada se trouve engagé dans un pénible débat sur son avenir, qui est centré surtout sur le Québec, la plus grande des provinces. Ces dernières années, tous les partis politiques se sont décidés, avec plus ou moins d'ardeur, à mener deux révolutions. La première s'en prend à l'ensemble des structures gouvernementales du Canada.

La deuxième révolution, au sein même du Québec, et qui engage plus directement le monde du travail, veut relancer l'économie stagnante du Québec et en donner le contrôle aux canadiens. Inspirés par les réussites de l'appareil européen de planification économique, nos planificateurs politiques pensent que pour assainir l'économie de la province, il faut un plus grand contrôle, une intervention poussée dans l'économie, avec un plan directeur de l'économie en vue de la pleine utilisation des ressources naturelles et humaines de la province. Je n'ai pas l'intention d'attribuer une tendance syndicaliste aux principes économiques ou aux déclarations des politiciens. Mais c'est peut-être la première fois dans notre histoire que non seulement le monde du travail, mais tous les niveaux de notre société québécoise manifestent l'opinion que ce pays leur doit une existence convenable dans le respect de la dignité humaine et pas seulement l'existence. Une existence convenable ça ne veut pas dire seulement la sécurité d'emploi mais aussi un revenu plus élevé, le respect des valeurs humaines. Et lorsqu'on tarde à les accorder même au milieu d'une économie à la hausse, on peut s'attendre à une agitation ouvrière considérable.

Malgré le réalisme des objectifs économique et politique de nos dirigeants, et les arguments très convaincants qui les justifient, l'opinion populaire des autres provinces n'a pas encore saisi toutes les implications de cette évolution économique, sociale et politique. Elle pose la question « combien de temps encore cette situation durera-t-elle, et qui va y remédier ? » Cette autre question aussi, tant de fois répétée par les anglo-canadiens, qui irrite le Canada français: « Que veut donc vraiment le monde du travail au Québec ? » Si l'amour de son pays nous pousse à connaître ce qu'il fut, ce qu'il est, et ce qu'il pourrait devenir, et à poursuivre l'idéal qui en résulte, alors l'incompréhension, l'ignorance de l'histoire syndicale du Québec, le culte du statu-quo, la simple distance, expliquent assez pourquoi certains anglo-canadiens posent cette question qui a le don d'agacer le canadien-français moyen.

Bien que le Québec attende certaines choses du Canada anglais, il attend d'autre part de son propre gouvernement beaucoup plus que ce qu'il en reçoit présentement. Nombre de porte-paroles du Québec répondront qu'ils veulent l'égalité et parleront de réforme constitutionnelle, de statut particulier, etc., mais le monde syndical du Québec maintient qu'il faut d'abord changer la structure et l'appareil interne du Québec et situe la cause des problèmes du Québec là où elle se trouve. C'est-à-dire les gouvernements précédents du Québec, qui jusqu'en 1960 étaient réactionnaires et gardaient le Québec hors de contact avec le progrès. Le monde syndical du Québec comprend trop bien que la réforme constitutionnelle, le statut particulier, etc. ne prépareront pas un seul enfant à s'intégrer au monde industriel d'aujourd'hui, ne libéreront pas la famille ouvrière des fardeaux usuriers du crédit, n'amélioreront pas le logement, la sécurité sociale ou la situation des chômeurs. Les gouvernements précédents ont utilisé les revendications nationalistes et autonomistes pour détourner l'attention du besoin de réformes profondes et coûteuses à l'intérieur, que le Québec aurait pu effectuer, sans qu'il soit besoin de blâmer les autres pour ses propres échecs. Le pouvoir était là mais il n'a pas été mis à profit.

Le CTC n'en est pas pour autant absout de tout blâme et son attitude doit changer avec l'urgence qu'impose au problème l'esprit de recherche et de réforme dynamique. Le tournant pris par le CTC et l'esprit de réforme de la CSN doivent continuer. Par une structure syndicale démocratique, nous cherchons à mettre dans l'esprit de chacun de nos membres la conscience d'être un élément vital de la société canadienne et non le vassal économique d'un syndicat dominé par une centrale américaine. Parce que pour le monde syndical québécois, les revendications économiques, sociales, culturelles et politiques des travailleurs québécois n'ont été que des abstractions sauf lorsqu'elles coïncidaient avec les intérêts des membres et des dirigeants américains.

Afin de comprendre en partie pourquoi les politiques des unions américaines opérant au Québec n'ont pas répondu aux demandes pressantes de réforme sociale, économique et politique, il faut observer comment les unions américaines ont réagi aux pressions et à l'influence des valeurs de base de leur propre société américaine.

Le concept du « syndicalisme d'affaires » est voué aux intérêts particuliers des syndicats individuels et de leurs chefs plutôt qu'à la reconstruction sociale de la nation. En conséquence leurs chefs sont encouragés à se voir liés par les mêmes impératifs que ceux des hommes d'affaires plutôt que par ceux de chefs d'un mouvement social et réformiste. On attend normalement des chefs de mouvements sociaux qu'ils aient une « vocation » et qu'une éthique et une morale les poussent à servir certaines grandes causes sociales.

On comprend mieux la conduite de ces unions américaines opérant au Canada quand on sait l'importance que la culture américaine attache

au « succès » personnel et financier. Bien que cela puisse paraître paradoxal, la force de cette notion de « succès » est intimement liée à celle de l'« égalité », sans égard à la formation antérieure de l'individu. Dans la culture américaine, la société compétitive englobe tout le monde, ce qui place en tête d'affiche la prospérité économique et l'ascension sociale. Ces qualités de jungle de certains syndicats sous contrôle américain opérant au Québec en étroite collaboration avec des entreprises à contrôle américain reflètent un code d'éthique syndicale qui est inacceptable et contraire aux aspirations des québécois. La grande différence des syndicats sous contrôle américain avec les syndicats vraiment contrôlés et administrés par les canadiens ressort de cette influence des absolus de la culture américaine, « succès », « égalité » à tout prix.

### Valeurs sociales et syndicalisme américain

Si l'on veut comprendre la façon d'agir des syndicats sous contrôle américain et les différences d'attitude du syndicalisme américain face aux aspirations économiques, sociales et politiques du Canada, on doit tenir compte de ce concept de « syndicalisme d'affaires », qui semble être l'idéologie dominante du mouvement syndical américain, et qui pourrait être en relation intime avec les pressions créées par la discrimination raciale, la violence et les autres valeurs de base qui sont une excroissance du système politique américain.

Les enquêtes du Congrès et les exposés journalistiques des années récentes traitant de la conduite de certains chefs syndicaux américains démontrent que ceux-ci reçoivent des salaires plus élevés, sont plus enclins à user de méthodes contraires à la moralité conventionnelle, et montrent moins de considération pour le mécanisme des procédures démocratiques que leurs confrères des mouvements syndicaux proprement canadiens ou européens. Ces dirigeants ne regardent pas leur mandat comme un devoir sacré ou une exigence de renoncement. Leurs gras revenus témoignent de leur attachement à l'idéal de l'ascendance sociale.

Dans les premiers temps du syndicalisme américain, les chefs syndicaux adhéraient sans doute à une idéologie prévoyant certaines exigences de conduite morale, de revenu et de style de vie, mais en glissant du syndicalisme social ou socialiste vers le « syndicalisme d'affaires », ils changèrent aussi l'échelle de valeurs et le système de comparaison.

Dans la mesure où le mandat syndical est passé d'une « vocation » à une « carrière », la conscience sociale s'est affaiblie d'autant. Leurs chefs ont aussi perdu toute réticence dans leurs relations avec les hommes d'affaires, ou dans l'élargissement du fossé entre leurs salaires et ceux de leurs membres.

Les exigences contingentes aux hauts postes dans les syndicats américains, le « succès » et l'« égalité », avec les hommes d'affaires importants, expliquent le fait que certains chefs syndicaux américains ont institutionnalisé des mécanismes dictatoriaux visant à prévenir la possibilité de leur défaite aux élections périodiques. Bien que plusieurs chefs syndicaux canadiens aient réussi une belle ascension sociale qui part de l'atelier au poste syndical, cette métamorphose ne s'est jamais traduite en termes d'argent et de style de vie comme dans le cas de ceux des Etats-Unis. C'est pourquoi les canadiens sont sous pression constante pour trouver des moyens de maintenir leur statut. Il en résulte un abîme entre la position du chef syndical et le niveau auquel ce chef s'est élevé et celui auquel il doit retourner après défaite, qui l'incite à essayer d'éliminer la démocratie de son syndicat.

La grande autorité, le grand pouvoir mis entre les mains des présidents « Américains Internationaux » à comparer aux chefs canadiens, ainsi que l'insistance du syndicalisme américain sur le « culte de la personnalité » sont sans aucun doute reliés à ces mêmes échelles de valeurs qui encouragent les pratiques dictatoriales du syndicalisme américain.

### **Réforme politique et syndicalisme américain**

On peut considérer cet aspect du syndicalisme américain comme une excroissance du système politique américain. La politique américaine possède deux institutions électorales: présidentielle et fédérale. Les élections principales aux Etats-Unis, au niveau national, au niveau de l'état et au municipal, portent sur le choix d'un seul homme, le président, le gouverneur ou le maire. Le gouvernement se résume à l'autorité exécutive de l'homme qui détient le poste-clef. Son cabinet dépend de lui seul, et non du parti ou des collègues parlementaires. D'où insistance sur la « personnalité » et cette relative indifférence face au parti ou aux principes. Ces facteurs politiques affectent certainement le mécanisme d'autres institutions telles que le mouvement syndical américain.

### **Conclusions**

Notre pays fait face à de graves problèmes économiques, sociaux et politiques. L'action solidaire du mouvement syndical, respectant le principe d'unité dans la diversité, représenterait un grand pas vers leur solution, si les conditions d'une telle collaboration pouvaient être réunies. La CTC doit d'abord se transformer. Il doit obtenir non seulement l'indépendance de juridiction par rapport au mouvement syndical américain, mais aussi des structures indépendantes sur les plans financier et administratif. En somme, il doit se repenser en fonction des exigences de la réalité canadienne.

La croissance économique du Canada, son développement, ses positions sur le marché extérieur, le contrôle étranger, le chômage et le contrôle nucléaire de notre pays, font l'objet du souci constant de tous les syndicats vraiment canadiens, dans la lutte qu'ils mènent pour former une politique économique, sociale et culturelle qui réponde à nos besoins et à nos aspirations de nation souveraine.

C'est un fait que les économies florissantes du monde sont celles qui, par des mesures vigoureuses, se sont adaptées à des conditions changeantes et à des besoins nouveaux: elles partent ainsi sur un bon pied. L'aspect le plus alarmant de l'activité syndicale au Canada, c'est l'absence d'idées neuves: la « Chambre du Travail » canadienne suit encore les sentiers battus du traditionalisme.

Bref, le mouvement ouvrier canadien doit repenser ses structures et son orientation. Ce n'est qu'à cette condition qu'il gardera la confiance de ses membres et le respect de la population canadienne. Le syndicalisme d'« affaires » à l'américaine est tout simplement dépassé. Le mouvement syndical ne doit plus se contenter de défendre le travailleur-salarié, mais il doit aussi défendre ses droits de citoyen et d'être humain. Le vieux syndicalisme du pain et du beurre doit être enrichi d'une politique de collaboration afin de créer au Canada une véritable démocratie économique, caractérisée par l'efficacité, la liberté, et le sens des responsabilités.

## UNION VIEWS ON UNION STRUCTURE

### INTRODUCTION

People who still believe that the problem of Canadian unity is strictly a political issue must have had some serious second thoughts after reading reports from the Canadian Labour Congress Convention held in Toronto this year as well as those from the Confederation of National Trade Unions convention held in Montreal in 1966.

The C.L.C. report showed that the problems of the Canadian Labour Congress or as it prefers to be called « Canada's House of Labour » bear an amazing resemblance to those of our own Federal Government.

Many of Quebec's delegates attending the C.L.C. convention, although having no intention of breaking away from that organization did insist that they should enjoy a kind of special status within the C.L.C. which would enable them to enter into an agreement with the Confederation of National Trade Unions for the purpose of regulating inter-union raiding and whereby speculative raiding would be eliminated, but at the same time the fundamental principle of freedom of association would be respected in any changes in allegiance. The C.L.C. position was that « Jurisdictional matters are the prerogative of the Canadian Labour Congress



rather than Provincial Federations ». Why were they making this request? There are many interesting answers.

Over the past few years, the C.N.T.U. has made spectacular gains in Quebec mostly among non-unionized workers such as the Civil Servants of the Provincial Government, Hospital employees and several hundred Engineers who joined the ranks of the C.N.T.U. In addition to these newly acquired members, the C.N.T.U. also welcomed into its ranks thousands of workers who transferred their allegiance from Q.F.L. affiliates. The C.B.C. and C.P.R. cases are well known because they provoked the controversial Bill C-186, still before the House, affecting national vs regional bargaining units in large public corporations. But there are many other instances that are just as important, even if they are less well known, involving transport workers in Montreal's metropolitan area, groups of the Montreal Harbor employees, etc.

Certain Q.F.L. officers have indicated that such losses were due to the fact that the structures of the Canadian Congress were too rigid, that they did not allow the Quebec Federation of Labour enough freedom of movement to compete successfully with the C.N.T.U.

When the Winnipeg convention in 1965, turned down their request for special status, which really meant more flexibility to adapt themselves to Quebec's differences, many expressed the opinion that the C.L.C. Executive would one day, regret not having taken their demands more seriously.

They were probably right, as a matter of fact, both the Federal Government and the C.L.C. are at grips with the same desire for self-assertion on the part of Quebecers with the major difference however, that Canada's Constitution is much more flexible than that of the Canadian Labour Congress and grants much more power and autonomy to the provinces than the C.L.C. does to its provincial federations. The latter, for instance, in the past were not even empowered to force C.L.C. affiliates on their territory to come into their own ranks. Many international union affiliates to the C.L.C. openly snub the Quebec Federation of Labour by refusing to join. And there is nothing the Q.F.L. could do about it.

#### THE C.L.C., THE Q.F.L. AND THE PROVINCE OF QUEBEC

Nevertheless, the difficulties of C.L.C. affiliates in Quebec are by no means due to that single cause and cannot be ascribed to Quebec nationalism or C.L.C. centralizing views.

There are definitely larger issues involved. One must realize that the C.L.C.'s position appears rather precarious as this huge Canadian body sits astride two horses. There are the so called « international unions » on the one hand, or the Canadian subsidiaries of American unions, and Canadian national unions on the other. The plain fact is that the C.L.C. impressive as it may appear with the great number of its affiliates, has very little authority over the vast majority of them. The real control and power still rests with head offices in Pittsburg, Detroit or Washington, D.C., and the C.L.C. officers in Ottawa are constantly by-passed by orders which the unions receive from their American headquarters.

Such a fact accounts for certain "Big Labour" practices which severely curtail labour democracy at the local level. What attracts workers to national unions is primarily the advantage they have of making their own decisions and controlling their own affairs, at the local level while the very remoteness of headquarters in American unions leaves them with the feeling that they are being manoeuvred by people who know nothing about them or their economic, social and political problems. In that perspective, one might predict that Quebecers will not always be alone in their restlessness. In a not too distant future, they might very well share that feeling with thousands of other Canadian workers in other provinces.

It is no secret either that the Q.F.L. wants all international unions to establish Canadian districts, directed by Canadians and appointed by the Canadian membership and that union trusteeship when and where necessary should be administered by Canadian leaders.

As we all know, Canada is presently engaged in a rather painful debate about its future and at the center of this debate is the Province of Quebec, the largest of the provinces. In recent years all political parties have come out, fired up in varying degrees, to lead two revolutions. The first, strikes at the whole concept of Canadian government structure.

The second revolution inside Quebec itself, and involving more intimately organized labour is directed at lifting Quebec's lagging economy and putting the control of it in the hands of Canadians. Inspired by the successful achievements of Europe's economic planning apparatus, the means of improving provincial economy involves in the minds of our political planners a greater degree of control and intervention in our economy and a plan for the economic organization of the province with a view to the most complete utilization of its natural and human resources. It is not my intention to attribute labour militancy to the economic philosophies or statements of politicians but, perhaps for the first time in our Country's history, not only organized labour, but all levels of our social strata in Quebec are manifesting expectations that this country owes them a good living and respect for human dignity and not only just a living. Therefore, a good living can mean not only job security but higher income and respect for human values, and when this appears slow in coming even in the midst of a buoyant economy, the result is that we have considerable labour unrest.

Plausible as the political and economic philosophies of our politicians may seem and although supported by very impressive evidence as to their justification, public opinion in other provinces has not yet caught up with all the implications of this economic, social and political revolution. Its question is, how long will the present situation last and who is going to do something about it? In addition there is that repeated question coming from some English speaking Canadians which so irritates French Canada, « What does organized labour in Quebec really want? » If love of one's country involves knowing what the country was, what it is, and what it may become and then working towards the resulting ideal, then lack of understanding, little knowledge of labour history in Quebec, satisfaction with the statu quo, sheer distance, all combined must be the reason that makes certain English speaking Canadians ask this one question which so annoys the average French Canadian.

While Quebec may want certain things from English Canada, it wants also a great deal more that it is getting from its own government. Many spokesmen from Quebec will probably answer that they want equality and will speak of constitutional reform, special status and so on, but organized labour in Quebec maintains that what is needed are changes in Quebec's own internal structure and apparatus and lay the blame for Quebec's problem where it rightly belongs, directly upon Quebec's past governments which until 1960 were reactionary and kept Quebecers out of the mainstream of modern development. Organized labour in Quebec recognizes too well that constitutional reform, special status, etc., will not educate a single child in face the modern industrial world, it will not relieve the working family of the burdens imposed by the money lenders, it will not improve housing, increase social security or lessen the burden of unemployment. It remembers how past governments utilized nationalist and autonomist protestations to divert emphasis from the need for profound and costly internal domestic reform which was within the power of any Quebec government to achieve without need to blame others for their own failure. The power was there, but it was not used.

This does not however absolve the C.L.C. from blame, and changes in attitudes are as important as the emergencies of the spirit and quest of dynamic reform itself. These changes in the C.L.C. like the reforming spirit of the C.N.T.U. must continue. The democratic union structure we seek is a spirit within individuals, giving all its members a sense of being vital elements in the Canadian society, and not economic vassals of American dominated labour unions, because as far as organized labour in Quebec is concerned, the economic, social, cultural and political welfare of Quebec workers has only been an abstraction except when it happened to coincide with the interests of American membership and leadership.

In order to analyse in part why the policies of American Unions operating in Quebec have not responded to the social, economic and political reforms so urgently in demand, it is necessary to observe the way in which American Unions have responded to and reflected the pressures resulting from the basic values of their own American Society.

The concept of American « business unionism » devoted to the self-interest of individual unions and their leaders rather than for national social reconstruction has important consequences in encouraging their leaders to view themselves as bound by the same standards as profit oriented businessmen rather than as leaders of a reformist social movement. Normally, the leaders of social movements are expected to have a « calling » to feel moved by a moral ethic toward serving certain major social values.

Much in the attitudes and the behaviour of American Unions operating in Canada can be explained by the American cultural emphasis on the norm of personal « achievement » or getting ahead financially. Although it may seem paradoxical, the strength of this « achievement » norm is closely related to another value « equality of status » regardless of the background qualities of the individual. American culture applies the norms of a completely competitive society to everyone, which places a high premium on economic affluence and social ascent. These jungle qualities of certain American controlled Unions operating in Quebec in

full collaboration with American controlled Companies reflect a mode of union ethics which are unacceptable and contrary to the aspirations of Quebecers. Much of the unique character of American controlled Unions as contrasted to that of truly controlled and administered Canadian Unions may be seen as a result of, or as a consequence of, American culture, « achievement », « equality » at any price.

#### SOCIAL VALUES AND AMERICAN UNIONISM

Any effort to account for the ways in which American controlled unions sometimes conduct themselves in Canada and how American unionism differs in its outlook as regards to Canada's economic, social and political aspirations must deal with this concept of « business unionism » which seems to be the dominant ideology of the American labour movement, and which may be closely related also to pressures created by racial discrimination, violence, and other basic values which are an outgrowth of the American political system.

Congressional investigations and journalistic exposes in recent years dealing with the behavior of certain American labour leaders have made manifest that these leaders received higher salaries, were more wont to engage in practices which violate conventional morality and showed a lesser regard for the mechanisms of democratic procedure than the leaders of the truly Canadian or European Trade Union movement. These leaders did not regard their office as a sacred trust or way of life. Their high incomes represented their adoption to the norm of getting ahead.

No doubt in the early days of American unionism, union leaders did adhere to an ideology which did prescribe certain standards of ethical behavior, of income and style of life, but as they shifted from social or socialist unionism to « business unionism », they also changed their values and standards of comparisons.

To the extent that union office has changed from a « calling » to a « career », their social ideology has declined to that same extent. Their leaders have also lost all restrictions about comporting themselves with businessmen or widening the gap between their salaries and those of their members.

The requirements attached to high union office in the United States, of « achievement » and « equality » with big businessman, may also account for the fact that certain American union leaders have formally institutionalized dictatorial mechanisms which prevent the possibility of their being defeated for re-election. Although many Canadian union leaders have achieved a great deal by moving up from the shop to union office, this shift has nowhere meant as much in terms of money and consequent style of life as in the United States. This may mean that they are under considerable pressure to find means to protect their source of status. Thus the greater the gap between that of union leadership and that from which the leader came and to which he might return on defeat, the greater the pressure to eliminate democratic rights within their union.

The greater authority and power centered in the lands of American International presidents as compared with Canadian leaders as well as the American union

emphasis on the « cult of personality » are undoubtedly related to some of the same value patterns which foster explicit dictatorial practices in American unionism.

#### POLITICAL REFORM AND AMERICAN UNIONISM

It may be noted that this aspect of American Unionism may be viewed also as an outgrowth of the American political system. The United States system adopted two distinct institutions, the presidential and the federal systems. The principle elections in the United States at the national, state and local levels are for one man, the president, governor or mayor. Government is largely viewed as the government of the man who holds the key executive office. His cabinet is responsible to him, not his party, nor to parliamentary colleagues. Hence, there is an emphasis on « personality » and a relative de-emphasis of party or principles. These factors, which have become norms in the political sphere, undoubtedly affect the way in which many other institutions operate, including the American Labour Movement.

#### CONCLUSIONS

We have great economic, social and political problems in Canada. The contribution of a united labour movement respecting unity with diversity, to their solution could be considerable if the conditions of this collaboration could be achieved. But the C.L.C. must first transform itself. It must obtain not only jurisdictional independence from the American Labour Movement, but also financial, administrative and structural independence. It could thus reorganize itself according to the requirements of the Canadian reality.

Canada's economic position in relation to its growth and development, its competitive position in foreign trade, the extent of foreign control, unemployment, and nuclear control have been the subject of constant concern and attention of all truly Canadian Trade Unions, in its struggle to shape our economic, social and cultural policy compatible with its national needs, aspirations, and sovereignty as a nation.

The fact is, that the booming economies of the world are those which by drastic measures have adapted themselves to new conditions and new needs. This gives them a solid basis for growth. What is most distressing about the Canadian Labour scene is that no new approach is being made, in this direction. Canada's « House of Labour » still works to old patterns.

In short the labour movement in Canada must reconsider its structures and its general orientation. It is only at this condition that it will retain the confidence of its membership and the respect of the Canadian population. The time has gone for the American-type « business » trade-unionism. The labour movement must not only defend the worker as a wage earner, but also as a Canadian citizen and a human being. The old bread and butter unionism must be completed by policies of cooperation in order to create for Canada a true economic democracy which will be distinguished by efficiency, freedom and public responsibility.